

## NEWS FOREIGN

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NOTES

In the last letter I sent giving particulars of what was going on here I referred to the fact that the Federal Labor party proposed submitting several amendments to the Constitution to the people. It was claimed by the supporters that these amendments were necessary so that the parliament could deal with trusts and combines, industrial and other matters. On two previous occasions these referendums were submitted and turned down by the people. Single Taxers have always opposed them, as we hold the opinion that the parliament has all the power it needs to deal with trusts, and that the industrial legislation proposed cannot possibly have any lasting good effect for the producers. If the parliament really meant business with the trusts all they have to do is to abolish the special privilege they now enjoy, and the power to overcharge would be gone. Our solution of the problem is to remit the customs duties and to tax land values. Evidently this is too simple for the professional politician. However, despite the fact that Labor men have, from nearly every platform in Australia told the people they were being robbed, and that the Referendums were the only thing which could stop the robbery, and that everything had been done to take the vote, the proposals are not now to be submitted. This means a waste of at least £25,000 of the taxpayers money at a time when it could ill be spared. Many of the rank and file are furious at the action of the Labor leaders in abandoning the measures just a fortnight before the vote was to be taken, but it is generally recognized that the reason the questions were not submitted was because it was almost certain they would once more have been rejected.

In my last I also referred to the fact that we had a Labor government in power in our State Parliament, and that their platform was the best they had ever submitted. Four out of the six members of the Ministry have at one time professed the Single Tax

faith; and when the Party platform included such measures as reduced rail freights and fares, increasing the income tax exemption from £200 to £300, an all round tax on land value, and proportional representation, naturally all true democrats accorded the party support and expected to get some measure of true reform. They have been grievously disappointed. When the Budget was introduced it contained proposals for a tax on motor cars, increased stamp duties, reducing the income tax exemption from £200 to £156 (this was a violation of the party platform), increased probate duties, and the one redeeming feature of an additional halfpenny tax upon land values. These proposals passed the Assembly and were sent on to the Legislative Council, a House elected on a property qualification. These worthies promptly threw out the land values tax, and amended some of the other proposals. The government tamely submitted to this rejection, instead of appealing to the people and fighting the Council in a constitutional manner. Then, to raise the necessary revenue they again violated their printed platform by increasing railway fares and freights instead of reducing them as they promised on the hustings. And this is the manner the people have been deceived by party politicians. Our only hope of getting a better standard of representatives is by getting Proportional Representation placed upon the Statute book. This measure the Labor party promised to carry last session, but did not even introduce the measure, the reason given being that there was no time. It seems there is plenty of time for small matters, but none for the consideration of the fundamental and essential questions.

Just at present the manufacturers are much concerned about "trade after the war." They are advocating all sorts of schemes to get a larger measure of protection than they now enjoy. And the newspapers are rendering them valuable assistance. It is a cunning attempt on the part of the manufacturers to get larger profits while the patriotic fever is at its highest point. We

are doing all we can to help people to get a clear vision in the matter. We hold open air meetings twice every week, distribute a lot of free leaflets, send letters to the daily and country press, and point out clearly that protection is simply a respectable name for legalized robbery.

We also emphasize the fact that the defense of Australia should be paid for by those who own land values of Australia. When we refer to this we always get a sympathetic response. Unfortunately our Federal politicians do not realise the importance of taxing land values, so they are floating loans to pay for the war, and thus providing a good investment at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ , free of income tax, for the "Capitalists" they claim to hate.

The cost of living in Australia is going up by leaps and bounds. The goods which could be obtained for 17/3 in 1901, cost 22/5 in 1914, and 26/6 in 1915. The 1915 figures are of course abnormal, owing to the war and the drought. But the 1914 are pre-war figures. You will note they are considerably different from those of 1901. One of the chief reasons for this is the tariff. In 1901 we collected £8,869,000 from food taxes, and in 1914 we collected no less than £15,062,000. Out of 125 lines of foodstuffs in the first three schedules of the Trade and Customs returns, no less than 117 are carrying heavy taxes, and only 8 are on the free list. Is it any wonder we have a high cost of living problem to solve? And yet our good Labor politicians want to give the workers more PROTECTION.—E. J. CRAIGIE.

THE Fels Commission has issued a printed list of distinguished Americans who favor the taxation of land values and endorse the Single Tax. They comprise the names of men who have attained high distinction in many fields of endeavor.

THE GREENFIELD (Pa.) *Bulletin* is issued every week by H. W. Noren. The purposes to which it is devoted is the civic improvement of Greenfield. But by this time its readers know just how in the opinion of its editor the town interests are to be benefited.

## THE COMMITTEE ON TAXATION OF NEW YORK CITY

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND REPORTS

(For the Review)

BY GRACE ISABEL COLBRON

(Continued)

Mr. Clarence H. Kelsey, President Title Guarantee and Trust Company, also representing the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, was the first witness at the hearing of November 10th. Mr. Kelsey might easily be termed the star witness because of the opportunity for humor afforded by many things he said. Like most of the other people testifying in opposition to the untaxing of buildings Mr. Kelsey seemed to fear that it would cause too many buildings to be built, but he also feared that it would ultimately kill speculation in land because it aimed to take away its value. Mr. Kelsey's ability to see the ultimate object of the measure does honor to his perception even if his idea as to the undesirability of that object does not do quite as much honor to his ethical sense. As far as its effect upon rent goes Mr. Kelsey believes that,

"It will not reduce rent where there are too many houses, as is now the case in New York. Rents are too low now and the landlord is not getting a fair return on his money and no such reduction of taxation will be sufficient to induce more men to become landlords or if it does it will only add to the ruin."

(These are Mr. Kelsey's own words as quoted in the printed report). Mr. Kelsey believes that New York is suffering from too many buildings, apparently from the point of view of the landlord, for there are certainly not too many homes available at a reasonable price when we find people crowded together eight to fifteen in a room. Furthermore, Mr. Kelsey believes that the better proposition would be the "control of supply of space and keeping of rents uniform." He does not state why, as